

and National Information Technology Center located in Ft. Collins, Colorado; Kansas City, Missouri; and Washington, DC. Direct ADP services are provided to the Office of the Secretary, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Communications, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and Executive Operations.

OCIO has oversight responsibilities for the Service Center Modernization Initiative (SCMI), which is the cornerstone of the overall reorganization and modernization effort of the Department. The ultimate goal of the SCMI is to create an environment of one-stop, quality service for customers of the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development mission area agencies.

## ■ Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer has responsibility for oversight of all financial management activities relating to USDA programs and operations. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) directs, manages, provides policy guidance, and coordinates financial management activities and operations. It ensures compliance throughout the Department with applicable accounting standards and principles, and ensures adequate controls over asset management, including cash management operations, real property, equipment, and inventories. Through partnerships, it provides financial management leadership and service to support quality program delivery in the Department.

OCFO is responsible for developing and maintaining an integrated departmental accounting and financial management system which provides complete, reliable, consistent, and timely financial information that is responsive to the needs of program managers. OCFO is also responsible for ensuring auditable financial statements.

OCFO operates the largest automated administrative servicing operation in the Federal Government—the National Finance Center (NFC) in New Orleans, LA. The NFC processes salary and benefit payments for nearly 450,000 Federal employees, performs administrative services for more than 100 Federal departments and agencies, and acts as recordkeeper for the Federal Government's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The TSP currently services an \$88 billion account for 2.5 million Federal employees and retiree members.

## ■ Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

### Office of Congressional Relations

USDA's Office of Congressional Relations serves as the Department's primary liaison with Members of Congress and their staffs, providing information on the Department's legislative agenda, budget proposals, programs, and policies.

## Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA) works closely with the Nation's Governors and State Commissioners of Agriculture, and other State and local elected officials, on various issues relating to their States. OIA is responsible for disseminating information on programs involving the implementation of USDA policies and procedures applicable to the Department's intergovernmental relations.

OIA participates with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations in the overall planning, formulation, and direction of the activities of the office relating to intergovernmental affairs. OIA serves as the USDA liaison with the White House and other executive branch agencies and departments with respect to intergovernmental affairs.

## American Indian and Alaska Native Programs

The Director of Native American Programs, located in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, is USDA's primary contact with tribal governments and their members. The director serves as the principal adviser and representative on all matters related to USDA policy and programs which affect and are available to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The director also chairs USDA's Native American Working Group, which reports to the Secretary and provides advice, support, and other assistance to the director. In 1992, USDA adopted an American Indian and Alaska Native policy which guides USDA's interactions with Indian tribes.

USDA provides a wide range of programs and services in all mission areas to American Indian and Alaska Native communities. In recent years, the Department has reached out to inform American Indians and Alaska Natives about USDA programs and services available to them, to deliver programs more effectively to Indian tribes, and to initiate new programs in response to the needs of Indian tribes. In October 1997, USDA published a *Guide to USDA Programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives* to improve tribal communities' access to USDA programs. The guide is also available on the USDA home page at the following address: [www.usda.gov/news/pubs/indians/open.htm](http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/indians/open.htm)

## ■ National Appeals Division

The National Appeals Division was established in 1994 to conduct impartial administrative appeal hearings and reviews of adverse program decisions made by officers, employees, or committees of designated agencies of the Department of Agriculture.

The World Wide Web address for the division is: [www.nad.usda.gov](http://www.nad.usda.gov)